DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 078 256 AC 014 434

TITLE	Guide. Supervisory Development Conference Series. Training Guide.
INSTITUTION	Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	VA-TG-5-18
PUB DATE	May 59
NOTE	10p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Conferences; Federal Programs; *Guides; *Management Education; Professional Personnel; *Supervisory Training; Training Objectives; *Training Techniques

ABSTRACT

A guide to the over-all Supervisory Development Conference Series is provided. The guide provides answers to the following questions: What is the need?; How was the Supervisory Development Conference Series developed?; What are the core units?; How do these core units fit in with management development training that field stations have already carried out?; How do these core units fit in with existing course material?; Why was the "discussion-conference" technique used?; What are some cautions to keep in mind when using the units?; What are the goals of the Supervisory Development Conference Series?; What will employees get out of the training?; Who should participate?; Who should lead the conferences?; How should the conferences be given?; How should the conference leader prepare himself?; What materials are needed?; What follow-up is necessary?. (For related documents, see AC 014 430-433.) (CK)

TRAINING GUIDE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

TG5-18

ED 017825

Supervisory Development Conference Series

GUIDE

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

MAY 1959

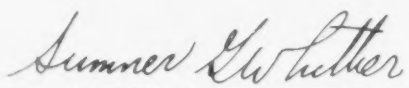
FOREWORD

VA is people - not machines, not statistics, not buildings - but People. Just imagine - 172,000 members of the VA family. If all 172,000 of them are working as a team dedicated to our great mission, what a strong impact they make on the entire nation and the veterans' care!

Should these 172,000, by some ill chance, become disgruntled and pull against the team goals, what a disaster would befall VA and its programs! Fortunately, our people are dedicated and hardworking - no matter what the grade, no matter what the position.

In this VA family the supervisor has a key role. His leadership and his example vitally affect those with whom he works. Are his people proud to be a part of the VA? Are they superior workers? Are they eager to help make the VA an even more effective organization? The supervisor can lead, can motivate, can inspire.

To do their jobs well, supervisors need certain skills, knowledges, and abilities. We want to give them all the help we can. The "Supervisory Development Conference Series" has been designed to help them meet this need. Supervisors at all levels will be pleased to take this training and to participate in similar developmental activities. Intensified supervisory training will bring about improved management in the VA, now and for the future. It is one of the most important means through which we can achieve our continuing goal of giving veterans encouragement and understanding, along with better and more efficient service.



SUMNER G. WHITTIER
Administrator

GUIDE FOR THE SUPERVISORY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE SERIES

What is the need?

One of our pressing management problems is the need to provide a continuing supply of highly qualified personnel to fill our administrative and supervisory positions. The maintenance of such a supply is essential to the efficient fulfillment of our mission.

Necessarily the training and development of such personnel has been decentralized in large measure to our field stations. However, it is also the policy of the VA to provide field stations with guidance and assistance in the accomplishment of their task. One form of this assistance is the provision of training course material which is generally applicable and which stations can conveniently use in their management development programs. By using such centrally prepared material stations are saved the considerable work which would be involved in developing such material for themselves.

In accordance with this policy the "Supervisory Development Conference Series" has been developed.

How was the Supervisory Development Conference Series developed?

After analyzing VA's supervisory and managerial positions and after obtaining your views, it was evident that there was general agreement that there are certain skills, knowledges, and abilities which administrative and supervisory personnel are likely to need for the successful accomplishment of their present tasks and as part of their general preparation to assume more difficult assignments in the future. These commonly required skills, knowledges, and abilities are mainly of the type for which formal classroom training can successfully be given. We decided, therefore, to develop a series of training units for management development, using the "discussion-conference" technique. A number of subjects or "core" areas were selected on the basis of the order of importance in which you ranked them.

What are the core units?

Each core unit is made up of one or more session outlines on a particular subject dealing with one aspect, or several related aspects, of the functions of management. The units issued or planned for future issuance are as follows:

TG 5-18-1: Better Group Meetings: An Aid to Better Management

TG 5-18-2: Delegation of Authority: Making Full Use of Your Team

TG 5-18- : Effective Two-Way Communication: A Method of Achieving Team Potential

TG 5-18- : Improving Quality and Reducing Costs Through Effective Personnel Management

TG 5-18- : Work Management

Other core units will be added to the Series as need indicates. We will keep you informed when additional units are selected for development.

What is the format of the core units?

1. Information about the unit. The format of the core units, as printed, follows a general pattern. Following the cover sheet is information about the unit. This may include such things as: the purpose of the session(s), the content or major topics, the appendices, and any necessary notes.

2. Conference outlines. Following this information is an outline to assist the leader. It is printed in double-column form. On the left side of each page is a "topical

outline" containing key words and phrases. The leader may insert in the left margin additional notes or symbols for his own use in the presentation. He may also indicate the time that he wishes to devote to the various sections of the session. On the right side of the page is the content of the unit. The important features of the organization of this material are:

a. Major divisions.

(1) Major subdivisions of each session are identified and separated by horizontal lines.

(2) The usual opening and closing remarks are omitted. However, it is assumed that the leader will establish a friendly atmosphere at the outset by using such devices as: informal friendly remarks, an appropriate story, and introducing himself and having each member introduce himself, if necessary. An approach suggested for use in the opening remarks is described on page 5. Closing remarks should include an expression of appreciation for the interest and participation of the trainees and, where applicable, an announcement of the date, time, place, and topic of the next session.

b. Language. Suggested language is shown as running comments to give the substance and set the tone of the discussion. The leader should express these ideas in his own language and in terms familiar to the participants.

c. Notes to the leader. These are printed in italics so that they will not be confused with material to be presented to the group or questions which the leader may ask the group.

d. Questions. Key questions are used throughout the sessions to stimulate discussion. They are indicated by a capital "Q" and printed in heavy type. Possible answers which the conferees may give follow the questions without any further notation. (In addition, at some points the notes to the leader outline areas of discussion, but leave it up to him to develop appropriate questions.) The leader should not limit himself to these indicated questions. The best questions will probably be those he phrases on the spot. In addition, he should let the group be as self-sustaining as possible and use questions only when he needs to stimulate the discussion.

e. Blackboard items. Items which are worthwhile writing on the blackboard, if developed in the discussion, are enclosed in a box. Blackboard material which is not needed is to be erased at the first opportunity, unless other instructions are given. If desired, devices other than a blackboard may be used, such as flannel board, chart pad, or flip chart.

f. Handouts. Following the session outlines are appendices and supplementary materials for use in connection with the session(s). The appendices which are given to the conferees are further identified as numbered handouts, as for example, HO #1. The conferees should be encouraged to keep notebooks which would include their notes, if any; the handouts; and any other material which is distributed.

How do these core units fit in with management development training that field stations have already carried out?

This is entirely a matter for you to decide. Many stations have been conducting vigorous training programs which cover substantially the same ground as the core units do. It is entirely conceivable that such stations would make only limited use of these units at this time. Other stations might find it appropriate to give these core units extensively at this time as initial or refresher training.

How do these core units fit in with existing course material?

There are a number of published training guides which may be used in your management development program, and we do not plan to develop core units in these areas. These guides are:

TG 5-1: Instructor's Guide for Job Instruction Training

TG 5-6: Conference Leader's Guide - Leadership in Supervision

TG 5-8: Position Classification Training Course for Supervisors

TG 5-10: Information for Supervisors about Accident Reporting and Employees' Compensation for Injury

TG 5-11: Essentials of Supervision

TG 5-12: VA Incentive Awards Program

TG 5-13: You Meet the Public (particularly the portions outlining supervisory responsibilities)

TG 5-17: Disciplinary Hearings

In addition, the core units are not intended to preclude the use of locally developed material. If you have prepared a training unit which covers the same area as one of the core units and if you feel that it is better suited to your needs, go ahead and use it. Also, the Supervisory Development Conference Series will never cover all management areas and some important ones may not be covered for some time. If there is an "uncovered" subject which you think is needed, don't wait for Central Office. Go ahead and develop it locally.

Why was the "discussion-conference" technique used?

In the "discussion-conference" technique each session has its specific objective, plan of instruction, and body of content material. The conference leader encourages discussion of the topics and channels it by the proper phrasing of questions and remarks. However, he does not control the free flow of ideas and opinions - so long as they are generally pertinent to the discussion. Emphasis is given to the emergence of ideas from among the participants, and the pooling of group judgment in the solution of problems.

This technique provided advantages essential for the "core units". The "discussion-conference" is specific enough to provide adequate coverage for the selected areas, while at the same time it is flexible enough to permit necessary adaptation at different types of stations and for different levels of employees. This question of adaptation is discussed in more detail later on.

What are some cautions to keep in mind when using the units?

1. <u>They are not a nostrum.</u> The units should not be considered as a dose of new wisdom and knowledge which can be poured into the members of a training group. Rather the units are designed to help the members of the group discover, become conscious of, and better use the wisdom and knowledge they already have within them. Paradoxical though it may seem, it is substantially true that people participating in this formal training are not likely to take away from it knowledges, skills, beliefs, and attitudes which they did not have in them, at least in embryo, in the first place. They may - and hopefully will - acquire in the course of the group experience a <u>conscious</u> knowledge and insight, a greater confidence, and an improved motivation to use their knowledges and skills, to practice their beliefs, and to apply their attitudes. Keeping this caution in mind will help course leaders avoid the dangers of forcible administration "because it's good for you" and of talking down to the group.

2. <u>They are not the last word on the subject.</u> These training units do not wrap up in a neat package the sum total of human wisdom in the areas which they cover. There is no "last word" of this type. If there were, you would have discovered it some time ago, since many of you have long been working in the area of management development. The units have a much more modest objective: to furnish the course leader with the best current thinking, practice, and research - both within and outside VA - so that he will have an adequate basis for the conduct of a conference. The units identify and set down those common-sense principles and practices which, for <u>most</u> people in <u>most</u> situations, are, <u>according to experience,</u> likely to produce the most desirable results. There are few "absolutes" in the area of management training. Generally the most that we can say is

something like: "Here is what our experience shows is the most promising approach in most cases of this type". Keeping this caution in mind will help course leaders avoid the dangers of following the training guides too rigidly, or of cutting off discussion because it isn't "in the book".

3. They are not the last word for management development. Formal course training of the type provided in the core units has real value in management development, but it is by no means the last word. For example, it produces intellectual acceptance, but it does not usually produce the more important element of emotional acceptance, which is essential before a person will practice what he has learned. Formal course training is deficient, also, in that it does not provide opportunity for the exercise and application of the acquired skills, knowledges, and abilities. Therefore, even though an employee is given extensive and intensive course training, it will still be necessary to make use of other training techniques.

What are the goals of the Supervisory Development Conference Series?

The goals of the Series are to:

1. Help administrative and supervisory personnel realize their many responsibilities and opportunities in the management of human and material resources;

2. Stimulate them to apply on the job the principles and practices of efficient management;

3. Improve their technical and administrative competence in their current jobs;

4. Achieve a uniformly satisfactory level of administrative and supervisory competence throughout the VA;

5. Increase the knowledge and develop the skills and abilities of experienced administrators and supervisors;

6. Develop a capacity for leadership which will tend to create a valuable reserve of potential executive talent.

What will employees get out of the training?

Aside from the benefits that will accrue to management through the training program, there are also certain benefits to administrative and supervisory personnel which should result from their participation in the training. Some of these are:

1. They will have an opportunity to check on the soundness of their practices and methods and to receive the benefit of an exchange and pooling of ideas through planned conferences with other administrative and supervisory personnel;

2. They will feel more confident about their judgments and decisions, since they will have had discussions concerning their problems with others;

3. They should be able to recognize employee problems more readily and to handle them more quickly;

4. They will be helped in developing their capacity for leadership and in preparing to assume greater responsibility;

5. The difficult job of management will be made less burdensome and more satisfying;

6. Enthusiasm for training will be generated, and a desire to learn more about the techniques and practices of good management will be created;

7. A closer relationship and spirit of cooperation and understanding will be established among administrative and supervisory personnel at all levels.

Who should participate?

The individual conferences have been pitched in tone and approach at about the "middle management" level. For this purpose the middle management group is defined as those supervisors (a) who are section chiefs or division chiefs, and (b) who are, in addition, in positions from about grade GS-7 to GS-13. However, the conferences, if properly adapted as to content and depth of treatment, can be used with management groups both above and below those levels.

Who should lead the conferences?

While it is expected that the Personnel Officer or a member of his staff will lead those sessions dealing with technical areas of personnel management, it is not desirable that other sessions be conducted by the personnel office staff. These sessions should be conducted by operating or staff officials of Division Chief level or higher who have had successful experience in leading conferences. In the first place, this is a practical necessity; in the second place the conducting of conferences is valuable experience for the course leader and an aid in his own development.

How should the conferences be given?

1. As indicated before, the basic patterns of the training sessions will remain essentially the same from session to session; that is, each session will be a discussion-conference concerning prescribed subjects. The conferees, however, should be given freedom to arrive at their own conclusions. The conference leader should avoid any tendency to do all or most of the thinking for the group. His job is to stimulate the group to think. The conference leader can make his function clear immediately with opening remarks which put in his own words the following thoughts:

   a. that he is a conference leader and not a conference instructor,

   b. that he is not an expert and is not there to "give the word",

   c. that much of the discussion will concern things that the conferees have learned from their experience, and

   d. that his task is simply to help the conferees learn from each other and share the benefits of their experiences.

2. The units may be given in any desired order. However, because the conference technique is used, we suggest that TG 5-18-1, "Better Group Meetings: An Aid to Better Management", be given first.

3. Each of the sessions is spelled out in considerable detail. Key questions are provided in a logical sequence together with possible answers which the group may give. If the leader feels that the group may not respond to a particular question, he may reword it as appropriate or convert it to a statement. If the questions fail to elicit answers which seem appropriate, the leader may ask supplementary questions; ask for illustrations of the points given; pursue the implications of the answers given; or suggest answers developed in other groups. However, the leader should be alert to recognize and accept a better answer or solution than that suggested or implied in the text.

4. Although the session outlines have been worked out in considerable detail, conference leaders should not be deceived into thinking that this is a "canned" series which requires little preparation or skill in conducting the conference.

5. The leader should adapt the prepared text, verbally and otherwise, to his own style. He may substitute his own wording so long as he covers the important points and maintains the general management point of view contained in the session outlines. He may also modify the prepared text to make it more appropriate for the particular group and to the particular circumstances under which it is given. He may draw on his own knowledge and experience to illustrate the principle under discussion in terms of situations familiar to the participants.

6. If desired, the leader may supplement the sessions through such devices as case studies, role playing, outside assignments, and outside readings. The cases in TG 5-16,

"Management Development Casebook", are large enough in number and varying enough in type so that he should not have any difficulty in making a selection which meets the needs of the group. If the leader desires to use outside readings for his own preparation or for the group, he may find helpful the bibliography in TG 5-14, "Manager's Guide for the Training and Development of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel at Field Stations".

How should the conference leader prepare himself?

After he has been selected to lead one or more training sessions, the conference leader faces the problem of getting ready to present the assigned session(s). A thorough study of Chapter 5, TG 5-3, "Staff Development Training Guide", should be generally helpful. This chapter deals with such matters as the characteristics and qualifications of the leader, the size, composition and scheduling of the training group, the length of meetings, and other subjects related to the administration of a training program. The following additional general suggestions may prove helpful for the conference leader:

1. He should review the contents of this guide and any related directives to assure a thorough understanding of the broad objectives of the program.

2. He should understand the operations and mission of the installation and know its administrative and supervisory practices.

3. He should carefully review the unit outline to be sure he understands the content; to make necessary modifications, deletions or additions; and to plan the time to be allowed for each part of the discussion.

4. He should have, for ready reference, actual case materials to be used to illustrate desirable or undesirable administrative and supervisory practices. Such examples should be disguised so as to avoid the possibility of offending through identification of individuals. Here, also, TG 5-16, "Management Development Casebook", may be used.

5. He should seek help if he needs it. The personnel office may be able to provide such assistance.

6. He may wish to practice the actual presentation alone or before someone who can offer constructive criticism. At the least a little time spent on the opening of the session will be worthwhile.

7. He may wish to secure in advance from the appropriate line officials or the personnel officer, some information about the members of his conference group whom he does not know. In this way he can learn their practices, their understanding of supervision, their attitudes toward their jobs, their attitudes toward being trained, and their understanding of the subject matter. This will assist the leader in getting good participation and in emphasizing areas of discussion of practical value to members of the group.

What materials are needed?

1. Standard materials.

   a. Name cards: Use these when all members of the group do not know one another.

   b. Paper and pencils so that the trainees can take notes, if desired.

   c. Blackboard, chalk, and eraser: As mentioned, you may use other recording devices, if preferred.

   d. Copies of handouts: The conference outlines identify the handouts to be used.

2. Other materials. Where other materials are to be used, the conference outlines give the necessary information.

How can training materials be requisitioned?

1. The training guides and handouts may be requisitioned in the usual manner. The guides are for the use of conference leaders and can be used indefinitely. Do not distribute

them to trainees. The number of guides requisitioned should be based on the maximum number of leaders to be assigned at any one time. In ordering, specify both the training guide number and the unit number, such as TG 5-18-1.

2. The handouts are to be given to each member. The handouts for the Supervisory Development Conference Series have been prepared for distribution by sets. In ordering specify the number of sets, the number of the training guide, and the unit number, as for example "10 sets of handouts for TG 5-18-1".

What training records are necessary?

Prepare and maintain records of training in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 4, VA Manual MP-5.

What follow-up is necessary?

The mere fact that employees have participated in a few Supervisory Development Conferences to help them think through their management responsibilities and increase their management skills is no reason to assume that they will not need additional help. Continuous effort is necessary to build and maintain a high level of competence in directing the efforts of others. It is essential, therefore, that those responsible for the quality of management at a field station give attention to following through on the development of personnel during and after the completion of this Series.

The manager can establish a favorable climate for the application of principles learned from this Series. By announcing support of such a program, by making necessary resources available, and by setting goals for improvements, top management not only helps to get the program underway but also indicates clear intent that all concerned should participate fully. During the group training phase of the program, the manager should keep informed of progress. After the completion of the formal training, top management becomes a part of the continuing process of evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of management practices at all levels.

The personnel office may carry a sizable operating responsibility in the actual administration of the program during the group training phase. In the follow-up phase, however, it assumes only the staff guidance and assistance responsibility. A personnel staff member who is assisting a supervisor to deal with a specific problem should help him draw on principles and practices learned during the training program. The personnel office also should take advantage of its continuous observation of actual management practice to determine whether training is meeting actual needs and to modify the training methods or materials accordingly.

The supervisors themselves carry the major share of follow-up responsibility. They are responsible for putting into practice in their day-to-day operations those principles and techniques which have been included in the training. Higher level officials, further, should take a continuing interest in those problems at which the training was aimed, to see whether recommended methods are being applied, and to provide supplementary on-the-job training.

While this follow-up process is immediately directed toward securing application of good supervisory practices presented in various training units, it also serves as a method of evaluating both the materials and the techniques of presentation. By giving proper emphasis to the follow-up process, management may secure evidence as to whether the effort expended is justified by the results obtained.

We would like to emphasize that those responsible for the administration of this Series should not expect too much change immediately. It takes time and careful follow-up to get the results we want. Even when people have understood and accepted what was presented, there may be a delay before they make what is learned a part of their day-to-day activities.

Chapters 7 and 8, TG 5-3, should be consulted for more detailed information concerning methods, procedures, and plans for the follow-up and evaluation of a training program. The pamphlet, "Assessing and Reporting Training Needs and Progress", Personnel Methods Series No. 3, U.S. Civil Service Commission, may also be helpful.

What happens after the formal course work?

We have already mentioned that these conferences are not the last word in management development. Formal course training is valuable, but it has limitations. No amount of formal course work, however comprehensive and however skillfully conducted, can by itself create competent managerial personnel.

As a matter of fact no one development method will achieve this goal, and no one development plan will suit all persons. For any individual the basic requirement is a development plan which is tailored to fill in the gaps which exist in his background of administrative knowledge and experience and which uses a variety of development methods suitable for this purpose. Program Guide 5-3 describes several "Growth Appraisal Methods" whose final product is an individual development plan; Training Guide 5-14, "Manager's Guide for the Training and Development of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel at Field Stations", gives suggestions on the development methods that can be used.

Although we have just stated that no one method is sufficient, we would also like to stress the primary importance in a person's actual behavior of what his own experience has taught him. All of us are in a learning situation all day long, and the most important influence in the development of any individual is his own day-to-day experience. Each supervisor guides and directs the experience of his people. For example, suppose a supervisor "learns" in a training course that the best way to prevent false and disruptive rumors is to see that people are adequately informed about what is going on. He may "know" this, but is not likely to change his behavior if he also knows that his own supervisor would consider him an indiscreet, time-wasting blabbermouth for trying to put such a principle into practice. In such circumstances he will probably continue to behave toward his people in the way that meets with his supervisor's approval.

Therefore, while the successful conduct of a management development program at each field station depends in part on the wise use of training material such as this Series, it depends, above all, on the wholehearted effort of everybody concerned.

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 11 1973
on Adult Education

VA-DC-284211